

Position Paper

Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly

Agenda: Drastically Reducing Maritime Pollution, including Plastic

Portfolio: Russia

Introduction To The Agenda

In today's world, Marine Pollution has become a rather pressing issue. The major water bodies of the world are facing heavy pollution and contamination due to the lack of effort towards decreasing maritime pollution from various nations of the world. Despite oceans covering more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the world, we have only recently noticed the negative impact that humans have had on it over the decades. Maritime pollution has several causes such as common man-made pollutants like pesticides, herbicides, industrial waste, fertilisers, oil, detergent, sewage and more as well as the drastic amounts of plastic and other such garbage that is thrown out into the ocean to be disposed off and these causes have only worsened the effects of maritime pollution over the years. Maritime pollution has had a lot of dangerous impact on the world around us, it has caused a disruption in the ecosystem and has led to the deterioration of several marine animals and plants, not only this, the pollutants that remain in the water are often swallowed by fishes who we in turn end up eating and thus, affecting our health and well-being. Maritime pollution has remained a constant complication over the past several years and it is high time that action is taken to reduce it and its effects.

Russia's Stance and Implemented Policies Towards Reducing Maritime Pollution

Russia stands firmly for the motion to reduce maritime pollution. Maritime pollution is a serious problem in the country. Ever since the catastrophic oil spill in the Kerchensky Strait of Southern Russia in 2007, Russian authorities have been working towards creating more concrete environmental laws. The

recent incident that was described as an ‘Ecological Disaster’, where 100-300 metres of pollutants were observed floating across the coast of Russia only goes to show that Russia must act now to improve its maritime situation. Not only this, the several incidents of the past years that have occurred in several countries such as the shipping disaster of Sri Lanka, the oil spill during the Gulf War, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, the MT Haven Oil Spill and of course the ever popular Great Pacific Garbage Patch are just some of the various incidents that also point towards a change in environmental policies across the world. Although Russia has not made any significant effort towards decreasing maritime pollution, the nation fully supports the creation of new and effective environmental laws that do not negatively impact Russia in any other way be it social, economical or environmental.

Proposed Solutions

The following are some steps that can be taken towards reducing maritime pollution around the world:

- Establish marine parks (an area where marine life are protected and human activity is limited) around the world to protect biodiversity.
- Establish a concrete set of rules that forbid dumping of harmful materials into oceans and create a separate committee to ensure the regulations are enforced at all times.
- Launch initiatives that encourage recycling and responsible chemical usage.
- Target the newer generations that are more actively pursuing anti-pollution and use online media to raise awareness about the negative impacts of maritime pollution.
- Add topics such as pollution, causes of pollution, prevention of pollution and importance of preventing pollution to education curriculums worldwide to inculcate a sense of responsibility towards the environment at a young age.
- Setup non-profits and funds towards creating awareness on and preventing maritime pollution.
- Encourage cleanup of debris as much as possible and push towards prevention and recycling of single-use plastic as well as other types of pollutants.

- The 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter (the London Convention), the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention (the London Protocol) and the 1978 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) are existing international legislative frameworks that address marine plastic pollution. They must be simplified, combined and appropriately edited into one single international law that can be implemented by as many countries as possible.

Conclusion

We have been witnessing this for too long and we must realise the importance of water around us and how poorly we have treated oceans and other water bodies thus far, the previously proposed solutions are just some of the countless ways in which we can help improve this aquatic dilemma before it turns into a serious crisis. Russia would also like to elaborate on the goal behind wanting to reduce maritime pollution including plastic on such a drastic scale, the reason behind this is simple: Pollution directly or indirectly affects us. Maritime pollution poses a threat to aquatic biodiversity when they ingest or suffocate in some plastic debris, not only this, maritime pollution has an effect on the health of human beings, microplastics have been found in tap water, beer, salt and water samples from across the world including the Arctic, ingesting them can lead to developmental disorders in both humans and wildlife. Such type of pollution not only affects climate change by increasing emissions but also has an impact on tourism by damaging the aesthetic value of tourism and ruining beaches and other such places with the build-up of plastic in huge amounts. Pollutants pose a major threat to oceans for centuries after they've been released since their removal artificially is difficult and they will take a long period to naturally break down. Hence, maritime pollution needs to be stopped as soon as possible before it causes any more damages and affects more and more species.

"I said that the oceans were sick but they're not going to die. There is no death possible in the oceans — there will always be life — but they're getting sicker every year." - Jacques Yves Cousteau, Oceanographer